CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 25 June 1998, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Maimeskul (Ukraine)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 799th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you know, the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Selebi, is about to leave his post in Geneva, as he has been appointed Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria. During the three years he has spent in Geneva, we have been able to appreciate his talents as a skilled diplomat, his energy and the authority with which he has upheld the positions of his Government. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would ask his delegation to be so kind as to communicate to him and his family our best wishes for personal happiness and success in his new job.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Egypt and the United States of America, as well as the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, the Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments, Mr. Grecu of Romania, and the Special Coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland. Before I give the floor to the first speaker, I would like to make a few introductory remarks.

Assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament as the representative of Ukraine for the first time, I should like first of all to pay tribute to this unique multilateral negotiating body, which has contributed so much to the cause of disarmament and strengthening international security, especially during the last few years.

My predecessors in this function, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, Mr. Al-Hussami of Syria and Ambassador Sungar of Turkey, deserve our gratitude and appreciation for their tireless efforts aimed at allowing the CD to carry out substantive work this year, pursuant to decision CD/1501. I feel myself also indebted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Bensmail, and the secretariat for the invaluable support and encouragement they provide to the presidency.

From its early existence as an independent State, Ukraine was and still is deeply involved in disarmament and arms control issues, as exemplified by adherence to START-I and the NPT, which has culminated in the complete elimination of the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. With this well-known record in nuclear as well as conventional disarmament, two years ago we became a fully-fledged member of the CD. To be a member of the CD means for us maintaining the authority and relevance of this unique multilateral disarmament body. Each and every member of the Conference should take care that the CD serves its purpose and meets the aspirations of the peoples for peace and a more secure world. As CD President, I will do my best to accommodate the national positions of various delegations while implementing decision CD/1501. My immediate predecessor, Ambassador Sungar of Turkey, has already completed the first skillfully crafted round of consultations on agenda item 1. It appears evident that the Conference needs to build on the results achieved during his presidency and seek ways and means to move this process ahead.

(The President)

At this stage the President would appreciate any new ideas as to how to find a balanced, mutually beneficial approach to item 1 which takes into account the concerns of all. Personally, I am convinced that against the background of current international developments, the Conference cannot afford to end this session without taking concrete action under agenda item 1, on cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament.

The activities of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, the only subsidiary body with a negotiating mandate, chaired by Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico, are a matter of hope and inspiration for the President. We also look forward to fruitful and close cooperation with the Special Coordinators, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, Minister Grecu of Romania, Ambassador Illanes of Chile, Ambassador Náray of Hungary, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, who are in the process of implementation of their respective mandates. The President remains confident that the current efforts on anti-personnel landmines, transparency in armaments and outer space will soon result in the establishment within the CD of appropriate mechanisms with negotiating mandates.

We are aware of the role and the responsibility of the presidency. In this capacity I am supposed to take into account and to reflect the opinions of all delegations, maintain the balance between different agenda items, so that a lack of progress on one particular issue will not result in a stalemate in another one. At the same time, each CD President inevitably brings with him new energy, desire and hope to push ahead the work of our Conference. To allow success in accomplishing this task I am looking for support from and cooperation with all delegations. I would endorse Ambassador Norberg's words that the President is not a magician but a facilitator of CD work. Having said this, I appeal to delegations to show the utmost flexibility to enable the Conference to move along the road towards further achievements in global disarmament and arms control.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): Mr. President, may I take this opportunity to extend to you warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament? Your skill and tact, coupled with Ukraine's unique experience in nuclear disarmament, to which you have made such a significant reference in your opening statement, are important assets for the Conference in these trying times. Be assured of my own and of the Brazilian delegation's full cooperation and support in your endeavours. And I also associate the Brazilian delegation with the warm words that you have, in the name of the Conference, addressed to Ambassador Selebi, who is leaving us to take further responsibilities in his own country.

I also express recognition and warm thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Murat Sungar of Turkey, for discharging his responsibilities with even-handedness and steadfast resolve. It was for me, personally, a rewarding experience to interact with him as G.21 Coordinator during his presidency. Under his presidency, the CD started to implement the programme of work laid

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out in document CD/1501, thereby undertaking its first substantive work since 1996. The various consultations held by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, as well as by the Special Coordinators on outer space, anti-personnel landmines and transparency in armaments, will hopefully provide a basis for actual negotiations to begin in the near future. Holding discussions on the agenda, expansion and improved and effective functioning of the Conference should also help in reaching a common and more updated approach to these pressing questions.

There is no doubt as to the importance of the areas mentioned above, and any positive development in their treatment by the Conference is to be welcomed. It goes without saying, however, that agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", remains the highest priority for the international community and for the vast majority of the members of this Conference, not least for Brazil. The presidency's consultations pursuant to document CD/1500 should therefore continue unabated.

In this respect, we took particular note of Ambassador Sungar's preliminary findings, as reported by him at our last plenary meeting, on 18 June. Although he felt he was not in a position to make recommendations at this time, it is clear that the qualitatively new situation created by events outside the CD only point to the urgency of bringing the presidency's consultations to good term as soon as possible. This is underlined by his emphasis on "the need for the Conference to develop, without delay, consensus on an appropriate mechanism or mechanisms to deal with this item in all its aspects", as well as his expressed belief that "recent events have clearly shown that the entire nuclear disarmament cause must be revived both in pace and scope to match the newly demonstrated urgency". We agree with these assessments, and also hope the CD will be in a position to take action on agenda item 1 in the third part of its 1998 session, as expressed in the report.

There is certainly no lack of proposals to that effect, and I myself, as the then Coordinator of the Group of 21, recalled to this plenary on 11 June those put forward by members of the Group in the past two years and published in specific CD documents. The range of views on the scope and mandate of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as reflected in these proposals, shows the length to which many in our Group have gone in attempting to take into account various alleged difficulties. Regrettably, though, reasonable opportunities, as recently as during the first part of this year's session, were lost as obstacles continued to be interposed. But we take heed of the fact that, as in all issues of a political nature, this one is also subject to the evolution of perception and opinion. If there ever was a solid reason for such obtuse opposition, the least we can expect is its re-examination in the light of the recent momentous international developments. If I were in my seminar at the University of São Paulo, I would say that this is an example of what the German phenomenologists would call "an intentional audacity of consciousness", and this is what I have tried to convey in the word "obtuse".

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The nuclear tests conducted by India and by Pakistan in the past month of May indeed mark a major international crisis of the post-cold-war era. They put in question the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, creating a situation that poses a real challenge to it.

For may years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, several countries remained outside its purview, unwilling to forgo the options that joining it would have implied. Despite strong vocal opposition, particularly with regard to the dual categories of States the Treaty recognizes, the NPT regime was not, at least publicly, defied by concrete action that denied its central tenets.

The end of the cold war saw a gradual tendency towards much wider acceptance of the NPT regime, although not of its inherent asymmetry. In various regions of the world, and for different reasons, recalcitrant countries, including two nuclear-weapon States, decided either to join the regime or to abide by its non-proliferation norms. This trend, coupled with the 1995 decision to extend the Treaty for an indefinite period of time, gave many the sense that the NPT regime had, despite its shortcomings, in fact become the world's generally accepted non-proliferation paradigm.

But this general falling into line apparently led some countries to overlook, or to choose to ignore, certain disturbing facts. One was that despite this trend and repeated exhortations by many, three nuclear-weapons-capable countries remained outside the regime, which they obviously saw as incompatible with their own security needs and perceptions. Another was that concrete measures towards nuclear disarmament on the part of nuclear-weapon States, an obligation and stated goal of the NPT itself, fell woefully short of expectations. This became increasingly apparent as the cold war waned and yet possessor States hesitated to truly commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

Through the challenge they pose to the regime, the nuclear tests conducted by India and by Pakistan expose, perhaps as never before, its contradictions and limitations, thus creating concerns as to its continued efficacy. They also have implications for concepts such as nuclear-weapon-free zones and their related negative security assurances. Another consequence of the tests is to elevate to a higher international plane what is essentially a regional conflict, raising the stakes for its solution. Moreover, by entailing a review of the security and strategic calculus of many countries, the tests may increase the hazard of further proliferation, particularly in regions already beset by tensions and ambiguities. That is why the current situation corresponds to an international crisis of large proportions, one that demands firm and reasoned action on more than one front if the response is to be effective. Just as it presents new risks, this situation can also provide the international community with an unprecedented opportunity.

Nuclear tests are invariably disquieting and deplorable events, and those conducted by India and by Pakistan are no exception. In various statements issued in the wake of such tests, the Brazilian Government, among

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other points, made clear its deep consternation and preoccupation with their consequences for the nuclear non-proliferation regime; urged India and Pakistan to adhere to the CTBT and appealed for restraint in view of the risk of a nuclear-arms race in the region.

In a world struggling to shake off the nuclear legacy of the cold war, nuclear tests are indeed perceived as sending the wrong signal. The international community as a whole is rightly concerned with the consequences of such acts for worldwide efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as for regional stability in a context of deeply rooted conflict. The unequivocal and unanimous manifestation on the part of the Security Council by means of resolution 1172 reflects this general awareness of the dangers of nuclear proliferation for global and regional security and sets the direction to be followed in a number of areas. Although much is expected of India and Pakistan, other concerned countries and the international community have a role to play as well.

In this regard, certain recent developments are to be welcomed, such as the moratoria on nuclear tests announced by India and by Pakistan, as well as the positive indications regarding renewed willingness for dialogue between them on outstanding issues. But in the current circumstances, both countries must do more in order to help defuse global and regional tensions generated by the tests. Unconditional adherence to the CTBT is a step that should be taken immediately. So should measures to stop any nuclear-weapon development programme; to refrain from weaponizing the recently demonstrated nuclear capability, including by means of ballistic missiles; to cease production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; and to undertake commitments to prevent the export of equipment, materials and technology that could contribute to nuclear proliferation.

Brazil is of course aware of the difficulties that lie ahead. We are nevertheless determined to add our efforts in order to help overcome them in a constructive and balanced fashion. It is in this spirit that the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Luiz Felipe Lampreia, recently accepted an invitation to participate, along with his counterparts from Argentina, China, the Philippines, South Africa and Ukraine, in a meeting on 12 June in London with the Ministers of the "Group of Eight" industrialized nations, where views were exchanged on possible coordination and follow-up action.

In this context, the experience of countries that have found workable ways to definitively rid themselves of nuclear weapons or to step back from the brink can be relevant. We are, together with Argentina, ready to share our own bilateral process of confidence-building and cooperation in the nuclear field, as both countries already indicated in a joint statement to the IAEA Board of Governors on 9 June. While this experience is not automatically transferable, in view of each particular historical background and the ways in which the end of the cold war affected different regions, it nonetheless provides a practical precedent that can hopefully inspire a reversal of the current tense situation.

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It is to us self-evident that nuclear non-proliferation cannot be effectively promoted if nuclear disarmament is not. In this respect, it is clear that the nuclear-weapon States must take measures to translate into real action the determination with which they recently stated they intended to fulfil their commitments under article VI of the NPT. It is indeed time for these States to match their words with deeds.

A number of concrete suggestions to that effect have been put forward in the joint declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden issued on 9 June and read out to this Conference by Ambassador Lars Norberg of Sweden at the 11 June plenary meeting. The declaration fully takes into account recent events and refers not only to the nuclear-weapon States but also to nuclear-weapons-capable States. Of course, the most fundamental step in that regard should be a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of nuclear weapons, a point in which there should be no reason for reluctance. Nor should there be any in the case of other proposed practical steps, such as de-alerting and deactivating nuclear weapons, thus considerably delaying launching time and reducing the chance that these weapons would ever be used, inadvertently or otherwise. Non-strategic nuclear weapons should also be removed from deployed sites. Measures such as these, along with progress on legally binding agreements on no first use and on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, would not only reassure the international community but also actually strengthen the non-proliferation regime by showing real movement towards the goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

These proposals and suggestions are not to belittle the important reductions in nuclear arsenals that are taking place in the START process, which, for their part, are duly recognized and encouraged in the declaration. But the difficulties and limitations of START are all too clear and present to be dismissed. The still pending ratification of START-II by the Russian Duma is a constant reminder of how the process is subject to political constraints and susceptibilities, particularly in the context of the expansion of a nuclear-capable NATO. Although the vaunted START-III promises to bring down arsenals to 2,000-2,500 deployed nuclear warheads by 2008, negotiations are yet to begin, and the absurd cold war levels of accumulation should not mislead us into thinking that such figures are actually low. Moreover, those with lesser arsenals should be brought into the process and make corresponding reductions.

In any case, we must not lose sight of the need for the numerical reduction of nuclear weapons to be clearly inserted in a phased programme for their complete elimination, and accompanied by a corresponding devaluation of their importance in military nuclear doctrines. Keeping "launch on warning" postures, developing new concepts such as a calculated ambiguity for using nuclear weapons against perceived non-nuclear threats, or justifying a nuclear deterrent to counter terrorists only help maintain a self-sustaining requirement for such weapons.

The current international situation, in which the fragility of the non-proliferation paradigm has been exposed, allows for different responses on

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many fronts. The CD has yet to give its own response, which, in view of the very nature of this forum, should start with the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on agenda item 1, where nuclear disarmament and related issues, such as a convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapons purposes, can be properly addressed and negotiated. Simply allowing the Conference to take up its rightful responsibilities on these questions would already be a great step forward, one whose timeliness the critical juncture we find ourselves in vividly underscores. This is what is now expected of all States possessing nuclear weapons or having such a capability, and it remains no less so of those where nuclear weapons originated or first, historically, proliferated.

This appeal may sound familiar. It has, after all, echoed in this hall for decades, reiterating it now is, however, by no means perfunctory. The current international circumstances warrant, in our view, its examination in a whole new light. Let us take this opportunity, lest we run the risk, as the great British statesman Benjamin Disraeli once observed, of moralizing among ruins.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to my country and to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, first of all, I would like, as you would fully expect, to congratulate you on becoming our President and, certainly, I pledge the support of Canada and the cooperation of our delegation. I would also like to recognize and praise the contribution of your predecessor, Ambassador Sungar of Turkey, who, I think, had a true baptism of fire in the waters of the CD and came through it very well.

Canada would also like to join in the very positive endorsement and respect that you expressed for Ambassador Jacob Selebi of South Africa. Certainly, Ambassador Selebi, through his work in this room and elsewhere, earned the full and complete respect and appreciation of the Government of Canada, and it is with great regret that we see him leave Geneva.

As we approach the end of the second part of the 1998 session of the CD, there are four challenges that Canada wishes to highlight. In doing so we can be reasonably brief given our earlier statements on four occasions in this plenary.

Turning first to nuclear disarmament, Canada set out its perspective on this critical subject in its 22 January statement, including its proposal for appropriate action in this body. The latter was summarized in document CD/1486 of 21 January. We maintain that perspective and we maintain that proposal. Essentially, we consider that nuclear disarmament does remain primarily the responsibility of the five nuclear-weapon States, all of which committed themselves at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference to "the determined pursuit ... of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons ...". Thus, Canada has supported the START process, calling for the early ratification of START II and the beginning of START III negotiations, and has

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called for the early broadening of this process to include the other three nuclear-weapon States. We have also strongly supported the efforts in recent years to broaden and strengthen the non-proliferation regime based on the NPT.

But where are we now, at the end of June 1998? There is no doubt but that we collectively have a major challenge ahead of us, both as regards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The promising START process is at a standstill and START II, six years later, is continuously being held hostage to other issues. The no-nuclear-testing barrier codified by the CTBT after decades of efforts has been breached. The second NPT PrepCom was not able to reach agreement, calling into question the commitment of some States to the 1995 decisions and resolution to which the great majority of States committed themselves. New or re-weighted articulations as to nuclear deterrence are being proffered. Efforts to address tactical nuclear weapons reductions in a transparent manner are stalled. And, in many quarters, arguments are being put forward designed to rearticulate or revalidate the political and security importance attached to the possession of nuclear weapons.

What should be the key elements of our collective response to this major challenge? There are several. First, we should all resist firmly the effort to "revalidate" nuclear weapons in the context of a new "nuclear realpolitik"; secondly, we should reaffirm by word and by action our commitment to ensure the NPT remains the basis for our efforts and we should strongly oppose any move to call it into question; thirdly, we should all urge the United States of America and the Russian Federation to reinvigorate now the START process and call upon the other three nuclear-weapon States to directly associate themselves with the next phase of that process; and, fourthly, we must all work together to mitigate and to reverse the recent negative nuclear proliferation developments.

These strategic elements are only the tips of the iceberg but are, we believe, critical for the overall success of our nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation actions.

And what can the CD contribute? We continue to advocate that the CD can and should make two contributions: it should establish a mechanism for the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues, with a view to identifying if and when one or more such issues might be negotiated multilaterally; and, separately, it should immediately initiate negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

Members of the CD will recall that Canada set out in document CD/1485 of 21 January considerations as to how the launching of those FMCT negotiations might be facilitated. While that launch has been made more difficult by recent developments, we continue to believe that with appropriate deliberation we can still proceed on that basis. We note, for example, with reference to points 4 and 5 of that document, the United States Secretary of State recently directed United States negotiators to conclude agreements by the year 2000 to make excess United States and Russian plutonium unusable for weapons. Canada welcomes this step, would certainly appreciate more information thereon, and hopes that it is the initiation of a dynamic and comprehensive process to deal

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with both plutonium and highly enriched uranium stocks. And once again, such talks should soon engage the other three nuclear-weapon States as well.

In sum, Mr. President, we join with our Brazilian colleague, Ambassador Lafer, in sharing the assessment of your predecessor, Ambassador Sungar, who stated in his 18 June statement in the CD that

> "it is my firm belief that recent events have clearly shown that the entire nuclear disarmament cause must be revived both in pace and scope to match the demonstrated urgency."

We sincerely hope that the CD, for its part, will do so.

Turning to the question of outer space, Canada believes that ensuring the non-weaponization of outer space is a key issue that the CD needs to address in order to promote strategic stability into the next millennium. We made a formal proposal to this end in January. We welcomed the appointment of a Special Coordinator. We assume that that appointment indicates a willingness by us all to engage seriously and substantively on this issue. For example, on substance, we have clearly stated that our proposal does not extend to the non-militarization of outer space, but only its non-weaponization. This is the essence, in our view, of promoting strategic stability within existing realities. We look forward to early success by the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka. As with our formal proposals on nuclear disarmament and on FMCT, we expect that at some stage during our formal work in the CD this year we will receive a formal response to these proposals.

As regards conventional disarmament, Canada believes that the CD can also make a useful and appropriate contribution. Transparency, dialogue and restraint remain the key elements of any such contribution. So also does a sense of focus and perspective; the CD is not the body within which to address specific regional situations and issues. We will continue to support your efforts, Mr. President, and those of Mr. Grecu, as we work to establish the basis for productive CD work in this regard.

I would like now to turn to the question of anti-personnel mines (APLs). Canada has, on several occasions in this plenary, made it clear that work on APLs in the CD is not a Canadian priority. There are other far more important issues relating to nuclear disarmament and FMCT, as well as outer space and conventional disarmament, that should be occupying our time and efforts. Moreover, we consider that the effort of the international community on APLs should focus on the existing viable and credible agreements dealing with these weapons, i.e. the Ottawa Convention and the CCW Amended Protocol II.

Thus, we have seen no real reason to proceed in the CD to negotiate a legal mechanism of lesser obligation that the Ottawa Convention. Nevertheless, we have recognized that others attach a priority to negotiating in the CD a transfer ban on APLs.

We respect the efforts of Australia's Ambassador Campbell as Special Coordinator to find a way forward on this file and will continue to do our

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best to cooperate with him. In doing so we will however be vigilant to ensure that any work in the CD does not weaken or detract from the Ottawa Convention and the new global norm we believe it has established. Therefore, building on our statement of 26 February, we wish to set out several considerations that will guide our delegation during any such negotiations.

First, the most - indeed only - appropriate definition of both "transfer" and "APLs" is contained within the Ottawa Convention. These terms represent agreements among both mine-producing and mine-affected States arrived at in the negotiating session in Oslo last September. In our view, there is no need to revisit these terms in any CD negotiations.

Second, while the core obligation of the proposed CD instrument seems to be relatively straightforward, we have not heard much in detail about this instrument from its proponents beyond some preliminary comments as regards its verification or verifiability. At Oslo, we decided not to establish a formal institution or structural mechanism for the Ottawa treaty, preferring instead to rely on the good offices of the depositary, the United Nations Secretary-General, and the annual Conferences of States Parties to perform any necessary functions. Our goal was to ensure that money went to address the APL problem, demining and victim assistance, and not to create an unnecessary bureaucracy. It is therefore entirely consistent that we will not now accept the creation of any bureaucracy or organization for the implementation or verification of any instrument of far lesser scope and obligation than the Ottawa Convention.

Canada will also have views on the preamble and entry-into-force provisions as well as other aspects of any such CD-negotiated instrument. Basically, we will wish to ensure that any new instrument is clearly placed in an appropriate context with respect to the global ban on APLs already agreed to by 126 nations. We would not, for example, support any formulation setting out a transfer ban as a first step in an ongoing, open-ended series of negotiations in the CD intended over time to achieve some kind of more comprehensive agreement.

These points having been made, let me be very clear on one final matter. Should, at any time, a move within the CD develop to move toward a CD treaty or instrument that confuses or undermines in any way the clear global prohibition on APLs entrenched in the Ottawa Convention, Canada will formally withdraw from any such negotiation process. And we would, in those circumstances, not sign any final product. Our commitment to comprehensive action to deal with APLs is defined and implemented through the Ottawa Convention. The point of this intervention is to make clear that Canada is not prepared to see any dilution of that commitment as the result of any CD process.

The field of disarmament remains a demanding one. Work needs to be done in the field of weapons of mass destruction, in that of conventional weapons, and in associated security fields. The CD can and should define what its contribution to each will be. In the all too short time remaining to us in 1998, Canada hopes that we will be successful in doing so.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): I would like to begin by expressing on behalf of the delegation of Egypt our pleasure at your assumption, Ambassador Maimeskul, of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation and I am confident that your efforts to further the work of this Conference will prove to be a valuable contribution and will build on the efforts of your predecessors in the presidency of the Conference this year, their Excellencies Ambassador Norberg of Sweden, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, Ambassador Al-Hussami of Syria and Ambassador Sungar of Turkey. I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Jacob Selebi, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, for his valuable contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament during his assignment in Geneva and wish him every success in his new post at Pretoria.

At this last meeting of the second part of this year's session, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassadors de Icaza of Mexico, Hofer of Switzerland, Campbell of Australia, Náray of Hungary, Illanes of Chile and Palihakkara of Sri Lanka and Mr. Grecu of Romania for the efforts they have exerted in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to them by the Conference on Disarmament within the framework of its programme of work. We hope that they will continue their efforts and their consultations in order to achieve maximum progress during this year's session.

In the spirit of positive participation which has characterized our work this year and in order to turn our deliberations during the two previous parts of the session into tangible achievements which will have a positive impact on the third and final part, I would like to make a number of observations.

First, I would like to re-emphasize the importance of establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the CD this year in order to start negotiations on a phased programme of work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, including negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material which could be used in the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the mandate proposed by the Egyptian delegation. I would also like to remind the Conference in this connection that, at the regional level, there are several resolutions calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as well as President Mubarak's initiative which called for the removal of all weapons of mass destruction from the region. At the international level, in the month of June, President Mubarak stressed the need to free the world from all weapons of mass destruction, and particularly nuclear weapons, through the negotiation of an international treaty to achieve this objective within an agreed time-frame. While congratulating Ambassador Sungar, the previous President of the Conference, on his consultations concerning the first item of the agenda and his interim report on the outcome of those consultations which he presented to the plenary meeting of the Conference on the 19th of this

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month, we look forward to the consultations which you, Mr. President, are going to carry out and we stand ready to cooperate with you in this connection.

Secondly, the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on security assurances under the chairmanship of Ambassador de Icaza, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, started in a positive manner, thereby confirming the importance of taking these deliberations into a more detailed phase and dealing with both negative and positive security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States in a comprehensive manner with a view to drawing up a multilateral convention in this regard which would become one of the cornerstones of the non-proliferation regime. I would like to congratulate Ambassador de Icaza on the summary that he submitted to the Committee concerning the manner in which this subject should be dealt with in the future.

Thirdly, the time is now ripe to tackle the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in order to ensure that no destructive weapons are stationed in outer space and that outer space is not used for military purposes, because outer space is a common heritage of mankind which, on the threshold of the third millennium, we must respect and treat from a broad humanistic perspective, using outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Fourthly, at a time when mankind is aspiring towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction, it is disappointing to note the continuation of research to devise deadly new weapons which threaten mankind with mass annihilation. That is an issue that this forum cannot disregard. In this connection, I would like to propose that the secretariat make a realistic and up-to-date compilation of what has been published or is known about the development of new types of weapons, particularly biological weapons, and the tests that are being undertaken to devise new forms of these weapons. I also suggest that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) carry out an updated detailed study in this respect like the studies that it has already carried out on a number of subjects of interest to the Conference such as, in particular, chemical weapons, transparency, the United Nations Register and landmines. We have often stressed the importance of coordination and complementarity between the different bodies concerned with disarmament affairs such as the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and UNIDIR. I would like to emphasize the special importance of this matter since the Conference on Disarmament should rapidly deal with such deadly weapons while they are still at the stage of research or development so that they can be covered by conventions prohibiting any of them that pose a future threat to mankind, including radiological weapons.

Fifthly, as regards the comprehensive programme of disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has an excellent basis on which to build, particularly in regard to the results achieved by the special coordinators which provide a basis for the achievement of more progress in this field. I would like to mention in particular the work carried out in this connection by the late Ambassador García Robles of Mexico and my own contribution as Special Coordinator on this subject in 1992.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

Sixthly, as regards anti-personnel landmines, the delegation of Egypt is glad that this subject is being dealt with in a serious manner. It is essential that the mandate of any ad hoc committee established in this regard should include two basic elements. First, the clearance of old and abandoned landmines, for which the States which planted them are responsible; second, the exemptions based on national security concerns, especially in the case of countries with extended borders in uninhabited areas. The delegation of Egypt has cooperated with Ambassador Campbell, the Special Coordinator on this issue, and has clarified our concerns so that they could be taken into account in his consultations. We shall continue to cooperate with him in future to ensure the success of his task, with due regard for our priorities.

Seventhly, transparency in armaments is a positive confidence-building measure which we should try to develop. We reiterate once more the importance of the inclusion of all kinds of weapons including stockpiles, national production, advanced technologies used in the production of weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. Without these essential components, it is impossible to determine whether the accumulation of weapons in States is in excess of their national defence needs and thus poses a threat to international stability, peace and security.

Eighthly, the Conference on Disarmament cannot be a club with a membership limited to a number of States. We should consider the requests made by some countries wishing to participate in its work in a positive and democratic spirit. We should begin by considering the concept of the optimum size of the membership of the CD as a negotiating forum. When discussing the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, we should always bear in mind its programme of work since the agenda and the programme of work are two sides of the same coin and complementary aspects that help to steer the work of the Conference. It is important also to reach agreement on effective measures to improve the functioning of the Conference and prevent time from being wasted in procedural mazes. The agenda and its priorities should be based primarily on the outcome of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD-1), which was adopted by consensus, pending the outcome of the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament SSOD-4.

Finally, I would like to stress the need to rechannel our activities during the remaining part of this year away from the phase of deliberation and exploration towards the phase of serious negotiation in order to achieve our objectives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Grey.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, I too congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency, and assure you that you have the full support of my delegation as your carry out your duties.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

I would like to make a statement today concerning the CD's work in the nuclear area. Along with a ban on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines (APL), a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) remains a top priority for the United States in the CD. We take satisfaction in the knowledge that we are not alone in our support for a cut-off treaty. The parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) agreed in 1995 at the Review and Extension Conference that a cut-off treaty was the next step in multilateral nuclear arms control after a Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We believed that was the case then, we continue to believe that today, and the NPT parties reaffirmed this commitment in various ways at the recently concluded PrepCom here in Geneva. I would also like to point out that the Canberra Commission report, which is so often cited in this chamber as a road map to a world free of nuclear weapons, also cites FMCT as the next step in multilateral nuclear arms control.

On 6 June, the United Nations Security Council encouraged India and Pakistan to "participate, in a positive spirit" in negotiations for an FMCT on the basis of the agreed mandate, with a view to reaching "early agreement". We note that all CD members have supported proposals of one kind or another for FMCT negotiations, and we hope the CD will commence these negotiations, on the basis of the agreed mandate, when it reconvenes next month.

Following the regrettable events last month in South Asia, the dynamic in the CD seems to have changed. I agree with many of my colleagues from the G-21 that the ill-considered decisions to conduct nuclear tests on the subcontinent should galvanize the Conference into action. But I have to say I take very strong exception to the statement made at our last plenary that recent developments in South Asia were triggered in "large measure" by a lack of substantive progress in nuclear disarmament in recent years. While we can and will honestly disagree about the scope of the work we should undertake in the Conference, we should at least be able to agree on the facts regarding what has been achieved so far in working towards nuclear disarmament.

Let's have a reality check. The United States and the other nuclear-weapon States, to varying degrees, have made significant progress both before and since the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Recent initiatives cover the gamut of nuclear-weapons activities: testing, production, and deployment. They also address all aspects of nuclear-weapons systems - the missiles and aircraft equipped to carry nuclear warheads and bombs, the nuclear weapons themselves, and the fissile material needed to make those weapons. These actions speak louder than words. A few examples:

By September 1996 all of the nuclear-weapon States had declared nuclear testing moratoria and signed the CTBT.

In May 1997 in Helsinki, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agreed to negotiate a START III treaty that, once implemented, will reduce the number of deployed United States and Russian strategic nuclear warheads by approximately 80 per cent from cold war peak levels.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

In September 1997, the United States and Russia signed the Plutonium Production Reactor Agreement, under which Washington and Moscow will work to convert by the year 2000 Russia's three plutonium production reactors that remain in operation so that they no longer produce weapon-grade plutonium. Both the United States and Russia announced a cessation in the production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium for weapons years ago. The United Kingdom and France have publicly announced a cessation of production as well.

As of January 1998, the United States had eliminated more than 900 heavy bombers and missile launchers, which carried over 4,000 accountable warheads. The physical destruction of strategic systems - blowing up ICBM silos, and slicing apart heavy bombers and ballistic missile submarines - is real disarmament, not just empty rhetoric.

As of May 1998, the United States and Russia were both almost two years ahead of schedule in implementing START I.

And it is not just delivery vehicles that we are eliminating. Since 1988, the United States has dismantled more than 12,300 nuclear warheads and bombs, averaging approximately 100 per month. We are continuing to dismantle these weapons at the maximum rate consistent with security, safety and environmental standards.

Since 1990, the United States has eliminated nuclear warheads for more than a dozen different types of nuclear-weapon systems.

Overall, 90 per cent of the United States non-strategic nuclear stockpile has been eliminated. All nuclear artillery, short-range tactile missile warheads and nuclear depth bombs have been eliminated or will have been by next year.

The United States also agreed with Russia that START III will include measures relating to transparency of strategic warhead inventories and the destruction of strategic nuclear warheads.

Furthermore, the United States Government is not just dismantling the warheads but is taking steps to make sure that the fissile material from those warheads is never again used in nuclear weapons. We have declared more than 225 tons of fissile material as excess to our national security requirements and have voluntarily pledged to make this excess fissile material available for IAEA safeguards as soon as practicable.

Twelve metric tons of this excess material is now under IAEA safeguards to ensure that it is never used again for weapons purposes.

Twenty-six metric tons have been committed for inspections by the end of 1999 and an additional 52 metric tons of excess material is being readied for international inspection.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

All of this is significant progress. All of these accomplishments are moving in the right direction and constitute a positive trend. And this is hardly an exhaustive list of steps we have taken.

Let me point out a significant fact: none of the nuclear-weapon States has tested in the last two years. Two of the States outside the NPT have tested in the last two months. Thus, from the point of view of nuclear disarmament, those two States are moving in the wrong direction, while the nuclear-weapon States are moving in the right direction.

Before moving back to the FMCT, I would like to make four fundamental points about nuclear arms reductions and nuclear disarmament.

First, the pace and scope of nuclear arms reductions depend largely on the security and environment and the level of international tensions. Since we cannot predict what the security environment and the level of tensions will be 20 years down the road, it is simply not practical or feasible to sign up to a time-bound approach or specified time-frame.

Second, history has shown that the incremental approach to reductions works. The START process has already resulted in the elimination of thousands of nuclear warheads. Sweeping proposals to eliminate nuclear weapons, on the other hand, do not have a stellar track record.

Third, asymmetries in the number and types of nuclear weapons possessed by the nuclear-weapon States make nuclear disarmament far more complex than many would imagine. It would be easier if we could say that each State would eliminate X warheads per year and we would all arrive at zero at the same time. But, among the other complexities, the size, composition and structure of nuclear forces are different and do not lend themselves to simple reduction formulas.

Fourth, verification of compliance with nuclear arms reduction agreements is technically complicated and politically sensitive. Trying to multilateralize verification of nuclear arms reductions at this point would be a recipe for disaster. I exaggerate only slightly when I tell you that the START I Treaty, with its verification provisions making up some 90 per cent of its bulk, is the thickness of a New York City telephone book. Thus, for practical reasons it seems self-evident that if such an arcane process required the consensus of 60 or more countries, rather than 2, it would spell the end of progress.

In returning to the FMCT, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a point about the cut-off treaty. The FMCT will be a multilateral, non-discriminatory treaty. It will make no distinction between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. All States parties will undertake a commitment not to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The FMCT will not bestow any new status on any State, but rather constrain all parties equally by banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons on a global basis.

(Mr. Grey, United States)

The same concept holds true for the CTBT. It is a non-discriminatory treaty in which each State party makes the same legal commitment: not to conduct nuclear explosions. The CTBT does not distinguish between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. Joining the test ban does not mean joining a nuclear club - it means joining the international community in turning back the nuclear arms race and nuclear proliferation.

In closing, I would like to say again that I believe that the dynamic in the CD has changed. Let us hope that when we reconvene for the third part of the session in late July, we can channel the new energy in this body into a positive force to do substantive work that can produce concrete results. The time for rhetoric that contributes to divisiveness has passed. Let us get down to business here when we return in July and begin negotiations on an FMCT.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Australia, Ambassador Campbell, who will address the Conference in his capacity as Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Mr. President, welcome to the arduous responsibilities of high office. I am sure you will acquit your duties with distinction. Your distinguished predecessors have paved the way for a more productive and cooperative Conference on Disarmament. Let us hope their efforts and yours bear fruit. You have my delegation's full support. May I also wish Ambassador Selebi well as he departs for his new assignment? His many skills will be sorely missed in this and other forums.

I take the floor today to present a progress report on the consultations that I have undertaken as Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines.

The decision of 26 March (CD/1501) mandated me to seek the views of the members of this Conference on the most appropriate way to deal with questions related to anti-personnel landmines, taking into account, among other things, developments outside the Conference.

I have, as a consequence, held over 40 bilateral meetings over the last six weeks, chaired open-ended consultations at which 32 delegations expressed their views, and consulted with each of the regional groups.

I appreciate the time delegations have afforded me.

I have noted the views of many delegations who believe the Conference on Disarmament has a contribution to make to reducing the unbelievable human misery anti-personnel landmines cause, by negotiating a ban on APL transfers.

I have listened to those who believe that no further work in this Conference is necessary, given the existence of other relevant legal instruments. But I have heard those same delegations say that, as long as

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

what the CD does is consistent with the terms of those instruments, they will not stand in the way of the commencement of negotiations limited to a transfer ban.

I have also heard and tried to understand the position of the one delegation that told me that what I was considering was simply a waste of the Conference's time.

There is, therefore, a wide spectrum of views in the Conference on all of the issues with which we seek to grapple, not just anti-personnel landmines. Finding a consensus on any issue is, as we all know, difficult. The challenge for a Special Coordinator is to remain objective.

It is not for me to let personal feelings or national positions intrude upon or influence my findings. This has not been easy. I have served as Ambassador in a mine-affected country and have seen at first hand the appalling aftermath of hostilities which have involved the indiscriminate use of dumb mines.

I can perfectly understand the relentlessness with which Ambassador Zahran pursues the issue of old and abandoned mines in the Western Desert and the Sinai, even if, at this stage, I cannot accommodate all that he would wish to see in the preliminary recommendations I make to the Conference.

Last year when, as the then Special Coordinator for anti-personnel landmines, I first worked on this issue, landmine victims were the hostage of a political debate over the appropriate forum for negotiating a ban on the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. That debate was resolved in favour of the Ottawa Process.

With the successful conclusion of the Ottawa treaty, the forum question is less of an issue. And I think it is now clear to all that the Conference on Disarmament could never have achieved, within the same time-frame, what the Ottawa treaty achieved for the 126 countries, including Australia, which signed it.

But, as has been pointed out repeatedly to me, not all countries signed that document. Indeed, some of the largest producers and users of landmines have not felt able to commit themselves to the undertakings set out in the Ottawa treaty.

Nevertheless, from my consultations, it is clear that many in this category, who are also members of the CD, are prepared to commit themselves at least to negotiate a legally binding instrument prohibiting the transfer of anti-personnel landmines. And this they are prepared and, indeed, willing to do in the Conference on Disarmament.

Although I am aware that there are one or two delegations who remain to be convinced, it seems clear to me that the consensus rule by which we work

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

will ensure that successful negotiations require the CD to take the Ottawa treaty as its standard when it comes to such issues as definition and verification.

It is equally evident that there is no shared willingness to see the Conference on Disarmament go beyond a transfer ban.

In this light, it has become clear that partial measures on APLs constitute the CD's preferred route. CD work, I believe, can be consistent with, and complementary to, existing instruments by creating a space allowing non-signatories of those instruments to make their own contribution to solving the landmine problem, hopefully, as some have already indicated, on the way to acceding to the Ottawa treaty itself.

I have concluded, therefore, that there is a prospect that the Conference may be willing to establish an ad hoc committee with the following possible mandate:

> "The Conference on Disarmament agrees to establish an ad hoc committee, under agenda item 6, to negotiate a ban on the transfer of anti-personnel landmines.
>
> "The Ad Hoc Committee will present periodic reports on its progress to the Conference."

I have also concluded that the Conference would most likely insist that the decision to establish such an ad hoc committee be accompanied by a "statement of understanding", possibly along the lines of the following:

> "In taking this decision, members of the Conference on Disarmament agree that for such negotiations to be successful, delegations will want addressed a range of issues including one or more of the following:
>
> "1. The need for consistency with the terms of existing international instruments concerning anti-personnel landmines;
>
> "2. Individual countries' national security concerns, the importance of demining and the availability of alternative technologies;
>
> "3. The nature of the international trade in anti-personnel landmines;
>
> "4. The possible impact a ban on the transfer of anti-personnel landmines might have on the indigenous production of such mines."

The recommended mandate is as much as I believe the Conference will bear at this time. The "statement of understanding" encapsulates as succinctly as possible the issues that delegations have indicated to me that they will want to raise in the course of negotiations.

There may be further considerations that need to be raised, including participation and input of information by mine-affected countries and

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

humanitarian organizations, and the desires that the CD process not detract from ongoing processes such as the universalization of existing instruments, demining, as I have said, and rehabilitation of victims. I hope to provide opportunity for these to be raised during and after the inter-sessional period.

We have come to the end of this Conference session. I hope that delegations, over the inter-sessional break, will give some consideration to the recommendations that I have put forward in this report in my capacity as Special Coordinator and return in August to offer their comments, suggestions and, hopefully, continuing support.

I would propose to hold a second round of open-ended consultations on my recommended mandate and its accompanying "statement of understanding" on the first Tuesday of the next session. This will be done in the hope of presenting an agreed proposal to the Conference for endorsement as early as pössible in the next session.

In closing, may I acknowledge the help and assistance I have received from the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Bensmail, and his staff, particularly Ms. Jennifer Mackby, and the support I have received from my research assistant, Ms. Rebecca Craske?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines for introducing his report on progress in his consultations, and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Mr. Grecu, who will address the Conference in his capacity as Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments.

Mr. GRECU (Romania) (translated from French): Mr. President, I would like to begin by congratulating you most sincerely on taking up the important post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a great pleasure to convey greetings to you as a distinguished representative of a friendly neighbouring country with which Romania maintains excellent relations. My delegation assures you of its full support in performing your tasks. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation for the skilful work of your predecessor, Ambassador Sungar of Turkey. At the same time I wish to convey my delegation's best wishes to Ambassador Selebi of South Africa on the occasion of his departure from Geneva.

(continued in English)

I have asked for the floor today to present, as required, a brief progress report in my capacity as Special Coordinator on item 7 on our agenda, namely, transparency in armaments (TIA).

In conformity with the Conference's decision of 26 March 1998, my task was "to seek the views of its members on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to this item".

(Mr. Grecu, Romania)

In the fulfilment of my duties, I started a process of broad yet thorough consultations, exploring the most suitable avenues in order to get concrete results. Therefore, I consulted bilaterally a number of delegations and held talks with a regional group, and a round of open-ended consultations attended by many of the delegations here present today.

As a very preliminary conclusion, I should say that I detected a vivid interest within the Conference on Disarmament regarding the matters related to TIA, which testifies to the importance many States attach to transparency in armaments as a means of achieving mutual confidence conducive to security and stability, both at regional and global levels. I am glad to share with the Conference my assessment that practically all delegations support the idea of engaging further work within the CD.

At the same time, there persist different approaches on the format in which this work should be carried out, the scope of future activity, as well as its purposes. As a consequence, more consultations are needed in order to narrow existing differences and increase the common basis of understanding, upon which we can build a promising premise for the next stage. I therefore intend to continue approaching delegations in the most suitable format and to make myself available even during the forthcoming recess.

Before concluding, let me express my warmest thanks to our able secretariat, in particular Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail and Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, for their valuable support. I take this opportunity to ask the secretariat to prepare a compilation of various proposals previously made within the Conference on Disarmament in connection with TIA, which, I am sure, will help us a lot in our further work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments for presenting his progress report on his consultations and for the kind words addressed to my country and the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Hofer, who will address the Conference in his capacity as Special Coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): In taking the floor today I simply intend to make a practical announcement in my capacity as Special Coordinator on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. However, as this announcement coincides with the first meeting of the Conference under your presidency, Mr. President, I should like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on the occasion of your taking the Chair. It is a particular pleasure to see you presiding over our deliberations. As the representative of Ukraine, which plays an important role in the area of security, both for our continent as well as for global stability as such, I am convinced that under your presidency the Conference on Disarmament will be able to make progress along the path so well mapped out by your predecessors. I would particularly like to encourage you to pursue vigorously the negotiating efforts on nuclear issues. Lastly, I should like to associate myself with the words of gratitude and good wishes expressed to

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

Ambassador Selebi of South Africa. His contributions, notably concerning the most recent expansion of the Conference, have strongly marked the work of our institution.

To return to my practical matter, I should like to draw the attention of the Conference to the working paper that I have drafted as Special Coordinator on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. I am very grateful to the secretariat, which, with its usual devotion and efficiency, did its utmost to ensure that the document, which bears the symbol CD/EM/WP.1 and the date of 22 June 1998, could be submitted to members and observers of the Conference before the end of this second part of our session. I also thank my colleague Ambassador Clive Pearson of New Zealand, who considerably improved the final version of this document, particularly by making its language more accessible.

The purpose of this document is to stimulate your thinking between the second and third parts of our session, thus laying the groundwork for a constructive debate before the end of the annual session. As this document shows, the concept of the most recent expansion of the Conference dates back to the beginning of the 1990s, although it was implemented only two years ago. This as well as other factors should prompt the Conference to take a step forward either by adopting a specific decision or by defining more clearly the criteria to govern future expansion. It is in this spirit that I should like to resume dialogue with the member States, those which have submitted an application to join and, of course, the observers in the Conference as soon as it resumes its work at the end of next July.

I should like to thank you as of now for the confidence you have placed in me so far in the accomplishment of my task, and for all your constructive and above all imaginative suggestions that should enable us to reach the objectives we all share, namely to enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Conference politically speaking, and to do so of course by following the consensus approach indicated in our rules of procedure.

To conclude, I should like once again to express my gratitude to all those supporting the common cause of our Conference. I wish you an inter-sessional period which is marked by well-deserved rest and also by stimulating thinking that will enable us to resume our work in a dynamic and forward-looking manner.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Special Coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference for his statement and for the kind words which he addressed to my country and to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to endorse the congratulations you have received on assuming your important responsibilities as President of this Conference today, and to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to associate myself with the good wishes for success addressed to our colleague and great friend Ambassador Selebi of South Africa.

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

I have taken the floor, though I was not on the list of speakers, simply because I wanted to make some brief observations on the report which Ambassador Campbell was so kind as to introduce today on the progress of his work as Special Coordinator on anti-personnel mines. I have noted with sadness, after a first reading and after having heard Ambassador Campbell out, that the views of my delegation have not been reflected in his report. I have read it through twice and I have tried to find where the views of my delegation might have been included, even if only with an indirect reference, since I had the honour of communicating them to Mr. Campbell in the conversation that we held, and I also made them public during the open-ended consultations which he so expertly coordinated. I find one reference at the end of page 1, which says:

(continued in English)

"I have ... tried to understand the position of the one delegation that told me that what I was considering was simply a waste of ... time".

(continued in Spanish)

Some of the colleagues around the table turned towards me when they heard this phrase. I must say that when I heard it, I turned towards Mark Moher, because, after all, the representative of Canada told us today, in a written text,

(continued in English)

"There are other far more important issues relating to nuclear disarmament and FMCT, as well as outer space and conventional disarmament, that should be occupying our time and efforts"

(continued in Spanish)

- and of course he said that in connection with anti-personnel mines. So I presume that the "one delegation" to which Ambassador Campbell refers here was the delegation of Canada. But let me assure Ambassador Campbell that the Mexican delegation fully endorses that part of the statement by the delegation of Canada.

The other point where I think there may be a reference to the views of the delegation of Mexico is the sentence on the most appropriate forum to deal with the issue of mines and on partial measures aimed at securing a complete ban. That sentence appears in the fifth paragraph of his second page, where it now says:

(continued in English)

"The forum question is less of an issue".

(continued in Spanish)

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

Since the conclusion of the Ottawa treaty. Will it be "less of an issue" because it was my delegation that raised it? We still believe that the appropriate forum for partial measures in relation to anti-personnel mines is the follow-up mechanism of the 1980 Convention and the meeting of States parties to be held in the year 2000 where we will be reviewing the operation and scope of that Convention and its protocols, including Protocol II and Amended Protocol II. I think that there we could reach agreement among those countries which will still have anti-personnel mines at that time in order to formalize the moratoriums which have already been declared unilaterally. As far as my delegation is concerned, Sir, I have pleasure in telling you that this very month the Government of Mexico deposited its instrument of ratification of the Ottawa Convention. We will examine Ambassador Campbell's report with still more care and full attention. With a little luck, perhaps we may find our views reflected in it and we will have the pleasure of communicating to him our views on his proposal at the appropriate time, possibly at the beginning of our forthcoming resumed session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Mr. Goosen.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me, as has been the case with other delegations, to welcome you to the important post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of the continued support of my delegation. I would also extend my delegation's appreciation to the Ambassador of Turkey for the excellent work he did during his tenure as President.

I would also like to thank you, as well as the Ambassadors of Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Australia, Romania, Switzerland and Mexico, who have expressed appreciation for my Ambassador, Ambassador Selebi, who is leaving Geneva at the end of this week to take up his new post of Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria. Our thanks also extend to those Ambassadors and colleagues who have expressed their appreciation privately.

As I am sure it can be appreciated, with the short notice with which Ambassador Selebi has had to prepare for his return to Pretoria, it has not been possible for him to address the Conference on Disarmament, although I am aware that given the time, he would have appreciated the opportunity to make a statement on his departure.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Ambassador Selebi since his arrival in Geneva, and I am aware that he considered his time here as one of the quintessential experiences of his career so far. Ambassador Selebi has focused on many issues during his tenure in Geneva and although there have been many highlights, he has enjoyed the disarmament field and this body in particular. They have been a positive challenge, which he has enjoyed tremendously.

As Director-General, which is the most senior post in our foreign service, Ambassador Selebi will be responsible for South African policy

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

formulation and implementation in all areas of South Africa's interaction in the bilateral, regional and multilateral arenas. In this post - even over and above his personal interest in the work of this Conference on Disarmament and in disarmament and non-proliferation in general - Ambassador Selebi will have a direct influence and input into the positions adopted by this delegation. When I next speak of instructions received - popular or unpopular - distinguished colleagues will now be able to put a face to the instructor.

Mr. President, I will pass on the kind words from yourself and others to Ambassador Selebi. I feel sure that he will appreciate your good wishes very much, and in turn would wish all delegations in the Conference on Disarmament every success with their future work.

Finally, and on an unrelated topic with regard to my earlier remarks, it is a pleasure for me to inform the Conference on Disarmament that the instruments of ratification for South Africa to the Blinding Laser Weapons Protocol and also the Anti-Personnel Mines Protocol of the CCW, as well as to the Ottawa treaty, have been signed in Pretoria and at the moment are being transmitted to New York for deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. We have come to the end of the list of speakers. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage?

As there are none, turn now to the informal document distributed by the secretariat which contains the timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for the first week of the third part of the session, that is the period running from 27 to 31 July 1998. This timetable was drawn up in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and the Special Coordinators and, as usual, it is merely indicative and can be amended if necessary. This being understood, I suggest that we adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 30 July 1998 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.